

Appeal Decision

Site visit undertaken on 24 May 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision Date: 21ST June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/22/3294113

Cedar House, Oddley Lane, Saunderton, HP27 9NQ

- The appeal is made under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Henrietta Church against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council (Wycombe Area).
 - The application, ref. 21/07465/FUL, dated 12 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as new driveway access to Oddley Lane; garage Extension and Alterations; Remove tile hanging to gables, replace with timber frames/brick detail, new porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application description mentions elements such as external cladding and a new porch. As this is not a Conservation Area, the change in cladding would not appear to require planning consent and the proposed porch would appear to be within the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order. Whilst there is mention in the appeal documents of internal works – these also would not require planning consent. It would therefore not be appropriate to issue a split decision in this respect. The Council has not raised any objections to these elements and as such will not be discussed further within this appeal focusing on the proposed garage extension.
3. Whilst suggesting that the proposed access could be acceptable, comments are made by the Council to the lack of information regarding ecological mitigation and biodiversity enhancements which may affect the principle of such an installation.

Main issue

4. Taking the above into account, the main issue is the effect of the proposed garage extension upon the character and appearance of the building and the greater locality.

Reasons

5. Oddley Lane is a narrow rural carriageway which contains no footpaths with grass verges and no street lighting which emphasises its rural location. The lane provides access to a linear group of 12 dwellings, where 10 dwellings are to the south of the Lane and 2 dwellings are to the north. Dwellings situated along Oddley Lane are large and detached with setbacks to front and side boundaries with large rear gardens. The dwellings themselves are typically two storeys tall and many of the dwellings appear to date from the mid-late twentieth century. A number of the dwellings attempt to mimic previous architectural styles such as arts and crafts styles with mock timber cladding, steep roof pitches, hanging tiles and pebbledash render combined with decorative brickwork. The grounds of each of the dwellings are well vegetated with mature trees and hedgerows along front boundaries which gives an emphasis on spaces in and around dwellings and a leafy and spacious character. The character of the grounds supports the status and positioning of the large dwellings which adds to their character of a formal picturesque landscape that has a distinctive character and appearance.
6. The appeal site is located to the end of the linear development and displays a number of positive qualities of this locality. The main building is a large two storey dwelling that is set into the plot with a steep catslide type roof form which has its eaves at first floor level. The roof has projecting dormers along with two forward two storey protrusions with gabled roof forms and clad in hanging tiles. To the left end of the main façade is a forward projecting single storey front extension which is utilised as a utility/plant room and to the right side of the front façade is a detached storage building. The building, together with the well vegetated grounds is a positive contribution to the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the area.
7. In undertaking extensions to existing buildings, the Wycombe District Local Plan 2019 (LP) Policy DM35 seeks to encourage development that provides positive characteristics such as understanding context, be high quality in and character in form, scale, layout and detailed design and the spaces around them, amongst others. LP Policy DM36 gives specific policy for extensions to existing dwellings whereas LP Policy 44 specifies a number of conditions to comply with regarding development in the countryside outside of the green Belt, extensions being an acceptable form of development subject to compliance with LP Policy DM36 and associated Neighbourhood Plans. The Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2033 (NP) is applicable to the appeal site where Policy 6 sets a number of design principles such as assessing street scape, vernacular, subservience, amongst others. These policies are supported by the Householder Planning and Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which offers guidance on specific elements of designing extensions and alterations, taking into account context, character, subservience and scale, amongst others.
8. The proposed extension to the garage would continue the forward projection and appear to be over double the length of the existing garage and contain accommodation in the roof space with the inclusion of a further dormer window to the rear and two dormer windows to the front roof plane. The SPD goes into details with front extensions and seeks that they do not unbalance

and do not dominate the building. The proposed increase of length of the garage is very large and excessively so that it would have a greater depth than the floor plan of the main dwelling. Dormer windows are traditionally used to add status to dwellings, along with main feature doorways and in this instance the combined length, height and increased status caused by the dormer windows and the new entrance created with double doors and gabled canopy competes with the main dwelling and detracts from its status, character and appearance. The combined increased length and height of the proposal combined with its increased status would be excessive in this particular context and would therefore not result in a subservient addition to the existing building.

9. I acknowledge comments in the appellant's Statement of Case (SoC) with regards to a group of three dwellings further along Oddley Lane which have detached garages to their front gardens. I have not been supplied with information in this appeal as to how the considerations behind these garages are similar to the appeal site, however these garages are noted as being detached, and also appear to have been granted some time ago before the current policy position. It is noted by the Parish Council as well as within the Planning Officer Report that such garages would be considered to detract from the street scene when considering today's policy position. As such, the presence of these outbuildings does not justify the appropriateness of the proposed extension.
10. I also note commentary within the appellant's SOC with regards to the screening of the development from a number of trees. Whilst there is some screening of the development, I disagree that this would resolve the impact that the proposed extension would cause towards the appeal building, and the street scene, particularly when there is a focus on spaces in and around the dwellings. The proposal would be highly visible and despite this, it would be an unsympathetic extension that would interfere with the building's architectural integrity and authenticity.
11. Taken as a whole, and in conclusion of this matter, the dominance and lack of proportionality of the proposed extension would cause unacceptable detriment towards the architectural authenticity and integrity of the existing building; and cause harm towards the character and appearance of the locality. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to the LP Policies DM35, DM36, and DM44 as described previously, which are supported by the SPD. Additionally, the proposed scheme would be contrary to NP Policy 6 as described previously.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR